2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

CHAPTER VIII.

FOOD.

Diet—Kâtu—Badaga and Kota Neighbours prey on the Todas—Todas give away valuable Property—Not flesh eaters—Ceremony of eating Buffalo flesh—Don't drink Spirits—Children's Food—Family Meals—Grace before Meat—No Weapons of the Chase—No variety of Live Stock.

CHAP. VIII.

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THE Todas have no sports or games, except the innocent tip cat, corresponding in its play very much with our boys' game of rounders. No violent exercise. No means of settling disputes by scientific personal conflict, as in wrestling, fencing or boxing. Nothing in fact pointing to natural turbulence of character and surplus energy. They wear no weapons of offence or defence. They do not even hunt, either, for the sake of providing themselves with food, or for the pleasure of the chase.

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They do not attempt to till the ground.

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The products of the buffalo form the main staple of Toda diet. No doubt, at some time or another, they depended upon that animal more than they do now; in a period when they were isolated from contact with agricultural races. Now they are well supplied with the ordinary cereals of the country, as rice, wheat, barley, varieties of the pea, millet and other small grain, also sugar, salt, and tobacco; all of which items are, and for many generations have been, either purchased from the surrounding tribes by the barter or sale of their own surplus ncl, or obtained by the levy from their neighbours,

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

the Badaga[1] tribe, of kûtu,[2] or tribute due to them as lords of the soil. This kûtu, which implies a permission to the Badagas to cultivate the land, is said[3] to be a certain portion of the produce, varying from $\frac{1}{10}$ to $\frac{1}{8}$, and shows that the Todas are the earliest *existing* race occupying the plateau of the Nilagiri Mountains.

Each Toda Mand has a claim on certain Badaga villages for their kûtu. Members of each family of the Mand go out in turn on a begging expedition to the village from which it is entitled to draw for support. And as no very accurate accounts are kept, either of the amount of kûtu due in any individual year, or of the quantity of grain which has already been supplied, this foraging stands with the Toda in lieu of sport, in so far as the uncertainty of the results is concerned; it being to the interest of the Badagas to postpone and shirk payment of grain as long as possible: whilst on the other hand, the state of the Toda stores, and his natural persistency combined, are urging him on to repeat the visits for the renewal of his granary. The result being that the Toda gets exactly as much grain as will just satisfy his actual necessities: the Badaga acquires land on cheap terms of rental.

Thus we find that these people have, for several centuries, been in the enjoyment of a considerable variety of nourishing and digestible articles of diet: probably as much in quantity, and nearly as great in variety, as most other races have access to: acquired too with the very smallest amount of personal labour; the mere tending of cattle.

From the fact of the strong similarity which is known to exist between the Toda and Kanarese dialects; and of the Badagas having followed the Todas from the hot plains of

[1] Badagas, a Kanarese people of the Hindu faith.

[2] Kûtu. See Chapter VI., note 7.

[3] This statement was made in a Report, dated 1835, from Mr. J. Sullivan, collector of Koimbatoro—in which district the Nilagiris lay—to the Government of Madras, in the Revenue department.

7:Thurston E-5 (no date)1909
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Avalanchĕ to Sispāra, I witnessed an interesting custom. The Toda family had come to a halt on the far side of the path; the females seated themselves on the grass, and awaited the passing of the sacred herd. This herd, which had travelled by a recognised route across country, has to cross the bridle-path some two or three hundred yards above the Avalanchĕ-Sispāra sign-post. Both the ordinary and sacred herd were on the move together. The former passed up the Sispāra path, while the latter crossed in a line, and proceeded slightly down the hill, eventually crossing the stream and up through the shōlas over the steep hills on the opposite side of the valley. As soon as the sacred herd had crossed the bridle-path, the Toda men, having put down all their household utensils, went to where the women and girls were sitting, and carried them, one by one, over the place where the buffaloes had passed, depositing them on the path above. One of the men told me that the females are not allowed to walk over the track covered by the sacred herd, and have to be carried whenever it is necessary to cross it. This herd has a recognised tract when migrating, and is led by the old buffaloes, who appear to know the exact way."

The tenure under which lands are held by the Todas is summed up as follows by Mr. R. S. Benson in his report on the revenue settlement of the Nilgiris, 1885. "The earliest settlers, and notably Mr. Sullivan, strongly advocated the claim of the Todas to the absolute proprietary right to the plateau [as lords of the soil]; but another school, led by Mr. Lushington, has strongly combated these views, and apparently regarded the Todas as merely occupiers under the ryotwari system in force generally in the Presidency. From the earliest times the Todas have received from the cultivating Badagas

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427 648 an offering or tribute, called gudu or basket of grain, partly in compensation for the land taken up by the latter for cultivation, and so rendered unfit for grazing purposes, but chiefly as an offering to secure the favour, or avert the displeasure of the Todas, who, like the Kurumbas (*q.v.*), are believed by the Badagas to have [754] necromantic powers over their health and that of their herds. The European settlers also bought land in 648 Ootacamund from them, and to this day the Government 423 pays them the sum of Rs. 150 per mensem, as compensation for interference with the enjoyment of their pastoral rights in and about Ootacamund. Their position was, however, always a matter of dispute, until it was finally laid down in the despatch of the Court of Directors, dated 21st January, 1843. It was then decided that the Todas possessed nothing more than a prescriptive right to enjoy the privilege of pasturing their herds, on payment of a small tax, on the State lands. The Court desired that they should be secured from interference by settlers in the enjoyment of their mands, and of their spots appropriated to religious rites. Accordingly pattas were issued, granting to each mand three bullahs (11·46 acres) of land. In 1863 Mr. Grant obtained permission to make a fresh allotment of nine bullahs (34·38 acres) to each mand on the express condition that the land should be used for pasturage only, and that no right to sell the land or the wood on it should be thereby conveyed. It may be added that the so-called Toda lands are now regarded as the inalienable common property of the Toda community, and unauthorised alienation is checked by the imposition of a penal rate of assessment (G.O., 18th April 1882). Up to the date of this order, however, alienations by sale or lease were of frequent occurrence. It remains to be seen whether

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Then come two important demi-gods: a) *Kwotèn*, a man-god whose fabulous life is closely associated with one of the Toda clans (that of Pan); Rivers believed him to have been an outstanding Toda personality who was possibly posthumously deified. b) *Kwoto*, another man-god; he is closely associated with the clan of Melgarsh; among the legendary feats which he is reputed to have accomplished is that of tying down the sun between two mountains and of taking it to drink at a stream every day, in order to prove to the gods, who had challenged him, that he possessed supernatural powers.

The language spoken by the Todas is a Dravidian dialect. According to Emeneau, it is more akin to Canarese (Kanada) than to Tamil, although it cannot be said to be a very close relative of the former either. All Todas are, anyhow, bilingual, and very often even trilingual, conversing freely in Badaga with their neighbours and in Tamil with visitors from the plains. As they have no script of their own, when they occasionally want to write something (such as commemorative inscriptions on temple doors) they make use of Tamil characters. I have never seen them use Roman letters, but I have been told (by Miss C. F. Ling for instance) that although not habitual, this is sometimes also done.

The economy of the Todas is a pastoral one, large herds of great horned buffaloes, which do not resemble those of the plains, being kept for their milk and milk products. Many of these animals are quite ordinary (*putir*) but the great majority of them are pedigree cattle of a sacred nature (*postir*), their ancestry being calculated through the cows. They are believed to have been given to the tribe by the gods. They are grouped in four principal categories, each graded hierarchically. Thus the lowest category is that of the *wursulir*, then come the *nodrovair* and the *Kugvalir*, and finally, the highest and most sacred of all, the *tiir*.

Like other pastoral people, the Todas consider it degrading to take to agriculture, and repeated attempts by the Indian Government to induce them to till the soil have miserably failed. When given a field to cultivate, they usually let it out to a Badaga for a nominal sum, preferring to carry on with their animal husbandry and its semi-nomadic form of life, a tradition deeply ingrained in them and to which they are greatly attached. Most of the milk, butter and buttermilk produced by the tribe is consumed by its members, but a certain amount is sold in the local market, and the money thus earned made use of to buy other foods and everyday commodities. On the whole, the Toda